DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 173 883 CS 502 588

AUTHOR Corsetti, Renato, Comp.; And Others
TITLE Language and the Right to Communicate.
INSTITUTION Universal Esperanto Association, Rotterdam (Netherlands).
PUB DATE 76
NOTE 38p.; Several pages contain light print

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Communication (Thought Transfer); Communication Skills; *Global Approach; *International Organizations; *International Programs; Language Handicaps; Language Skills
IDENTIFIERS *Esperanto; *International Communication; UNESCO

ABSTRACT

Drawn from the proceedings of the Sixty-second World Congress of Esperanto, the items in this publication focus on language and the right to communicate. Its contents include a discussion paper on the right to communicate, emphasizing the linguistic aspects of international communication; an address by the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) surveying the work of that organization in the area of international communication; and summaries of addresses on the ways in which language differences hinder cooperation among nations, UNESCO and linguistic communication, and language and the democracy of communication. A summary of the principal views expressed by the participants in the Congress, recommendations for steps to be taken by organizations concerned with the right to communicate, and a resolution adopted by the Congress calling for national Esperanto associations to support the work of UNESCO are included. (FL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED173803

Esperanto Documents, new series, number 13 A (1978)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

LANGUAGE

AND THE RIGHT TO COMMUNICATE

This report was compiled and edited by:
- Renato Corsetti
- Humphrey Tonkin
- Probal Dasgupta.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
UEA
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Universal Esperanto Association
Nieuwe Binnenweg 176
3015 BJ Rotterdam, Netherlands

CS502 588

2

Copyright, UEA, 1978

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 5

The Right to Communicate: A Discussion Paper
by Humphrey Tonkin 9

Address by the Director-General of Unesco,
Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow 15

Language Differences Hinder Cooperation
by Ralph L. Harry 21

Unesco and Linguistic Communication
by Andri Ísaksson 23

Language and the Democracy of Communication
by Leonard R. Sussman 25

THE DEBATE AND ITS CONCLUSIONS 27

RECOMMENDATIONS 35

CONGRESS RESOLUTION 39

INTRODUCTION

. . . The 62nd World Congress of Esperanto brought together 1200 participants from some forty countries. Its principal topic was: "The Right to Communicate" . . .

The 62nd World Congress of Esperanto took place in Reykjavik, Iceland, from July 31 to August 6, 1977, under the patronage of Dr. Kristján Eldjárn, President of Iceland, and with the participation of Mr. Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow, Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco), and numerous other dignitaries and specialists.

The principal topic of the congress was a subject currently receiving close attention from governments across the world and by such international organizations as Unesco – "The Right to Communicate."

The World Congress of Esperanto is an annual event. Organized by the Universal Esperanto Association (UEA), the Congress brings together speakers of Esperanto from around the world for a week of meetings, discussions and cultural events. This is just one in a number of activities for which UEA is responsible. From its headquarters in the Netherlands, UEA organizes the worldwide promotion of Esperanto, publishes books and periodicals, and coordinates a range of national and local activities. UEA is a politically neutral, international cultural organization which exists to promote the International Language Esperanto as a second language, for international communication, beside the various first languages of the world.

Esperanto, whose beginnings date from 1887, is spoken today by hundreds of thousands of people in all parts of the world. Recent trends suggest that the number is steadily growing.

In addition to its work for Esperanto, UEA is interested in the whole field of international communication, particularly as this relates to language. The leaders of UEA feel that insufficient attention has been given to the linguistic

aspects of international contacts and they are working to change this situation. Their decision to devote the 62nd World Congress to "The Right to Communicate" is one element in a concerted effort to persuade the governments of the world, world leaders and the public at large, to turn their attention to language problems and to seek comprehensive solutions to these problems wherever possible. The world is beset by numerous difficulties – from disarmament to pollution, from hunger to illiteracy, from the scarcity of natural resources to problems of human rights and responsibilities. But the confrontation of such issues requires not only common will but also common means – including common linguistic means.

The 62nd World Congress brought together 1200 speakers of the International Language from some forty countries. It was the first large conference to be devoted to the right to communicate and it commanded worldwide attention. Although concerned also with other subjects (principally the internal administration of UEA and its affiliated organizations), the Congress was particularly promising because of one unique feature: although international in character, its entire proceedings took place without the aid of interpreters and translators – in the International Language Esperanto.

The Right to Communicate was explored through several different types of sessions during the congress week.

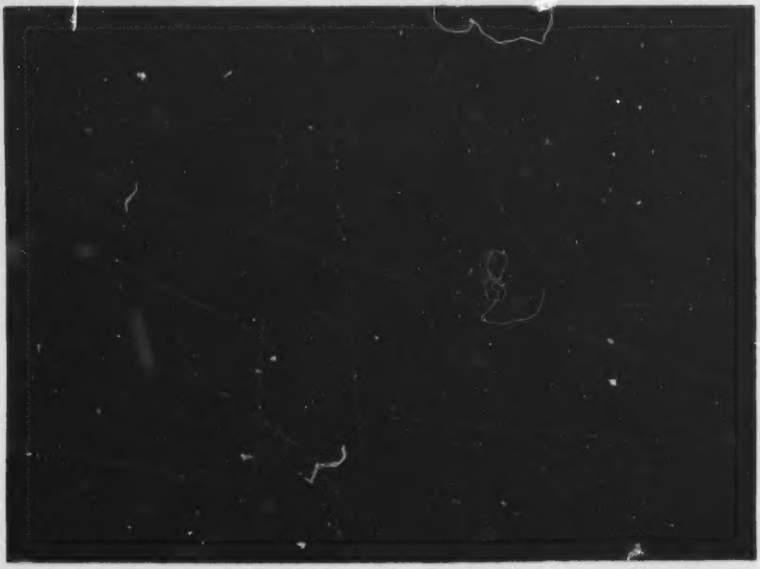
1. The principal speaker in the Opening Meeting of the Congress was the Director-General of Unesco, Mr. M'Bow. Both he and Mr. Ralph Harry, Australian Ambassador to the United Nations, who also spoke in the Opening Meeting, emphasized the right to communicate in their remarks. Their speeches are reprinted in this report.

2. During the first few days of the congress week a series of informal meetings was organized by the coordinator of the congress topic, Dr. Renato Corsetti (Italy). Among those playing leading roles in these consultations were Ambassador Harry, Mr. Leonard Sussman (Executive Director, Freedom House, New York), Professor Jonathan Pool (U.S.A.), Mr. Probal Dasgupta (India), Dr. Detlev Blanke (German Democratic Republic), and numerous others. Out of these informal meetings there came a measure of consensus on some of the principal issues, and these views were in turn conveyed to the formal sessions occupying the latter part of the congress week.

3. Several lectures in the International Summer University, an annual feature of the World Congresses, dealt with aspects of the right to communicate. Professor Sin'itiro Kawamura (Kagawa University, Japan) considered "The Language Problem in the Communication of Chemists"; Dr. E.J. Lieberman (U.S.A.) dealt with sex and the right to communicate; Mr. Probal Dasgupta considered the present state of English in India, and Professor Jonathan Pool (University of Washington, U.S.A.) asked "Can Communication Rights be Equal?". The zoologist Professor C. Støp-Bowitz (University of Oslo) dealt with a related topic: communication among animals. Aspects of language formed the topics of Dr. Detlev Blanke (Humboldt University, Berlin), Mr.

Árni Böðvarsson (author and linguist, Reykjavik), and Professor Helmar Frank (University of Paderborn, Federal Republic of Germany).

4. On Thursday, August 4, a bilingual panel discussion was held with the participation of congress members and Icelandic specialists in communication. Contributors to the discussion, which was chaired by Professor Humphrey Tonkin (University of Pennsylvania, U.S.A.), were Dr. Blanke and Mr. Dasgupta and three lecturers at the University of Iceland: linguist and communications specialist Silja Aðalsteinsdóttir, anthropologist Haraldur Ólafsson, and sociologist Thorbjörn Broddason.



5. On Friday, August 5, the Second Plenary Session of the Congress was devoted to the right to communicate. Chaired by Drs. Corsetti and Tonkin, the session featured presentations by Professor Andri Ísaksson, Secretary of the Icelandic Unesco Commission, Mr. Leonard Sussman, Professor J. Kameshkov (Soviet Union), Professor Jonathan Pool, and Dr. Ulrich Lins (Federal Republic of Germany). The remarks of Mr. Ísaksson and Mr. Sussman are included in this report.

6. A half-hour programme on Icelandic Television was concerned with the right to communicate. Broadcast on August 12, but recorded during the congress week, the debate featured Mrs. Ursula Grattapaglia (Brazil), Ambassador Ralph Harry (Australia), Dr. Renato Corsetti (Italy) and Mr. Probal

Dasgupta (India). The programme, which was in Esperanto with Icelandic subtitles, was chaired by Óskar Ingmarsson, of Icelandic Television.

These six settings for debate on the right to communicate were supplemented by informal *ad hoc* discussions and by written materials. They led to the adoption of a formal resolution at the Closing Session of the Congress and to a number of specific conclusions and recommendations contained in the present report in revised form.

Included in the Congress Handbook distributed to all participants was the text of a brief position paper by Professor Humphrey Tonkin, President of UEA, which formed a starting point for the discussions in Reykjavik. This, too, is included in the present report.

Humphrey Tonkin

THE RIGHT TO COMMUNICATE: A DISCUSSION PAPER

. . . Included in the Congress Handbook was a discussion paper which formed the starting point for the week's deliberations. It emphasized above all the linguistic aspects of international communication. We have revised the text in the light of the Reykjavik meetings . . . . . .

According to Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers."

In the years following the promulgation of the Universal Declaration in 1948, Article 19 was interpreted principally in two ways. At the level of the individual, it was related to the guarantees of freedom of conscience and freedom of speech which form so fundamental a part of so many national constitutions. People should be allowed to think as they please and to give voice to these opinions if they choose to do so – that, in varying degrees, was how the application of the article to the individual was interpreted. At the level of the collective, stress was laid on the removal of barriers to communications media – censorship, restrictions on foreign reporters, radio jamming, and so on. Unesco, in these early days, gave special emphasis to the creation of a free flow of information across national boundaries, at the level of both the individual and the media of mass communication.

In recent years Article 19 has come in for a good deal of reinterpretation. It has been pointed out that there is more to communication across national boundaries, for example, than guarantees to allow the passage of information. In practice, say some, the "free flow of information" often simply means "the unimpeded flow of communication by those who happen to control its media." Third-world nations, in particular, have suggested that while communication from the industrialized countries to the developing countries is intense, aided by sophisticated technology and communications techniques, communication in the other direction is less effective. And in the industrialized countries themselves, it is increasingly hypothesized that the growth of new communications technology threatens to upset the balance of participatory democracy in favor of those with the power and resources to control this technology.

Out of these discussions there has grown the concept of the Right to Communicate. Introducing a resolution on the subject to the Unesco General Conference in 1974, Bertel Zachrisson, of Sweden, said, "In education, science and culture, the right to communicate is essential. This right is indispensable in order to accord people their democratic rights and make it possible for everyone to exercise democratic control, and to grant all members of society participation in its development." This resolution really began Unesco's active concern with the definition of a Right to Communicate generally applicable to all societies.

Sweden's resolution gives special attention to two-way communication. Today we are surrounded by sophisticated devices for the facilitation of communication. Our television sets, linked with communications satellites, bring pictures from across the world instantly into our living rooms; these same satellites carry our telephone messages across the oceans, often dialled directly, without human intervention. Centralized data banks ease our purchases, and make it simpler to get credit or to locate information. Airplanes take us in a matter of hours to the other side of the world, or bring others to us. But at the same time, there are some who believe that these advances in communications technology threaten to engulf us with their sheer quantity of data, that they are a potential menace to our privacy, and that unless they are used humanely and intelligently they can stifle our dissent rather than encourage our participation.

In this context, many consider Article 19 no longer an adequate statement of an increasingly complex set of issues. These issues can be divided into three broad categories – as they relate to individuals, as they relate to the mass media themselves, and as they relate to local and national communities. At the individual level, the freedom to express opinions in private is constantly open to abridgement as surveillance techniques improve. And perhaps the freedom to express oneself as one likes in public was adequate in a world where the unaided human voice was the dominant mode of communication, but many feel that it may be less meaningful in a world in which so much spoken communication is through airwaves and telephone wires, and access to these media is unequal. Perhaps, too, the general right to privacy (if there is such a right) needs more careful definition and interpretation. And when men lived in an environment in which they could move no faster than the fastest horse, the issue of freedom of movement was a good deal less complicated than it is today. When their lives were limited to the localities in which they were born, access to information about the larger world was less crucial than it is in our own times.

For the institutions of mass communication many of these same issues arise, but in slightly different form. Reporters suggest that what matters is the right to be present when news occurs, to report it without hindrance to those who employ them, and to protect their sources. The media themselves often emphasize that there is the matter of the right to publish, the right to disseminate their publications, and the freedom from outside interference –

to report the news fairly, to be open to other opinions, to allow a right of reply.

Communities, too, it is argued, have a right to communicate. For them it means the right to make themselves heard, to preserve and nurture their own cultural integrity, to provide themselves with the means of communication (including the technological means). Cultural groups or nation states whose contacts with the larger world are entirely in the hands of others might, it is argued, be unable to make their voices heard or to determine their own destiny.

As with so much else in the area of human rights, the nascent Right to Communicate contains within it a mass of complexities and potential contradictions. That is one reason why discussion of the nature of the right is so very important, and that is why Unesco has included study of the Right to Communicate in its Medium-Term Plan for 1977-82. More than one scholar has pointed out that these discussions will themselves constitute a test of the observance of the very right with which they are concerned. There are many who feel that no limit should be placed on the *right* to communicate what one wishes when and how and where one wishes, but that no special steps are needed to facilitate *access* to communication for those who cannot now afford it or reach it. Others feel that some control must be put on *what* is communicated. Still others feel that there is indeed a need to make access and participation easier – but only for certain purposes. And others feel that the unabridged application of the concept of the free flow of communication means cultural domination by rich nations, or political domination by powerful governments – or, indeed, national chaos and a new Tower of Babel.

It is surprising how few link the myth of the Tower of Babel in this context to the matter of language itself. Although much of modern communication is by technological means, still language is the basis for most of it. Television uses language; radio uses language; information is gathered and imparted by language; political participation depends on adequate means of linguistic communication.

This lack of attention is the more surprising because in the last thirty years or so there has been a rising awareness of the nature and function of language as a political instrument. Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations emphasizes respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, "without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion," and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights elevates this emphasis on four types of discrimination into a general principle of non-discrimination in which language figures prominently. The Final Act of the Conference on European Security and Cooperation, in line with many other recent international agreements, lays stress on the rights of cultural minorities also with respect to their languages.

But international communication, and even communication within single countries between cultural groups, is inherently discriminatory in the sense that it is based on the languages of particular societies and groups of societies. When countries of the Third World view the principle of the free flow of

information as a device whereby the rich can dominate the poor, they often neglect to mention that this is not only because of economic domination but also because the rich nations possess international *linguistic* means of communication often beyond the scope of the poor. A country whose population does not speak one of the major languages of wider communication cannot easily compete for the attention of the world with a country in which one of those languages is native. It must use foreign languages to gain access to news media, to train its scientists, to convey its ideas and needs to the rest of the world. And this problem is not confined to the relations between rich nations and poor. Nor is it confined simply to the competing activities of news services or diplomats; it is a problem in satellite communication, in telecommunications, in the collection of data, in publishing, in scientific research, in aviation – in all the multifarious activities that are bringing the nations constantly together, and at the same time setting them in hierarchies.

Of particular interest to our own Association, concerned with the dissemination of the idea of a neutral international language whereby communication might take place on an equal basis, and with greater ease than is possible through national languages – of particular interest to us is the matter of an *individual* right to communicate. How can an ordinary individual participate in the affairs of his nation or the world if he does not have the linguistic means to do so? At most he can do so only with the benefit of intermediaries. Yet mankind today has at its disposal the *technical* means to communicate with the other side of the world as readily as with one's neighbor. Only language bars the way. The knowledge of a language of wider communication is, or should be, every man's right – but that implies that the language not be the possession of a particular nation or group of nations, not a part of its foreign policy or a mode for its economic domination.

But if we recognize that the only language that fulfills this criterion is the International Language Esperanto, we should also recognize that we shall convince no one of the accuracy of our analysis if we do not understand the complexity of the issues that lie behind it. Hence we must come to understand what the Right to Communicate really is, so that we can define the place of language in it. We must articulate our conclusions as forcefully as we can in the debate that is now going on. And we must, if we can, demonstrate by the very vigor of our debate itself that a single, common language for international communication makes of the Right to Communicate not a hollow promise but a living, palpable and conspicuous reality.

Meeting in September 1975, the International Broadcast Institute formulated a definition of the right to communicate which might provide a useful starting point for our own discussions:

> Everyone has the right to communicate. It is a basic human need and is the foundation of all social organization. It belongs to individuals and communities, between and among each other. This right has been long recognized internationally and the exercise of it needs constantly to evolve and expand. Taking account of changes in society and developments in technology,

adequate resources – human, economic and technological – should be made available to all mankind for fulfillment of the need for interactive participatory communication and implementation of that right.

In this context, we might consider the Right to Communicate in the following ways:

1. What are the areas of human activity where the need for this right is most strongly felt?

Dr Humphrey Tonkin, president of the Universal Esperanto Association presenting his discussion paper to the Congress

2. In what ways do conflicting needs – between individual and individual, between community and community, or between individual and collective – impinge on this right or limit its applicability?
3. What are the linguistic dimensions of the Right to Communicate, and how does the lack of a common language hinder the application of this right?
4. What steps are required to articulate the need to give attention to these linguistic dimensions and to solve problems thus defined, where appropriate, through the International Language Esperanto? What are the strengths and limitations of such a solution?

This is a tall order for a single congress, even one without language problems of its own. But the contribution of Esperanto speakers to this important debate cannot be stressed too strongly, nor the urgency of that contribution emphasized too much.

Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow

ADDRESS BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF UNESCO

. . . The principal speaker at the Opening Session of the Congress was the Director-General of Unesco. His address surveyed the work of his organization on the right to communicate and stressed UEA's dual aim to promote international communication and preserve cultural pluralism . .

Mr. President,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am happy to take the opportunity of my official visit to Iceland to speak to you at the opening of this 62nd session of the Congress of the Universal Esperanto Association, and I offer my warm thanks to the President of the Association, Mr. Tonkin, for his kind invitation.

You have chosen as the theme of your Congress "The right to communication": this is a subject which interests Unesco on more than one count, for to communicate is the first step towards mutual understanding.

One of Unesco's main tasks, as laid down in its Constitution, is to contribute to world peace, understanding between peoples, and cooperation between nations. Historically, Esperanto is rooted in the same principle. Dr. Zamenhof, the enthusiastic inventor of this language, was deeply disturbed in his youth by the way in which linguistic differences could tear a community apart. He became convinced that the only way to restore peace among men would be to provide them with a means of direct communication and that a universal language was needed which was sufficiently versatile, neutral and comprehensible to perform this function for the man in the street. He used to say that for Esperanto there was no strong or weak, privileged or inferior nation.

The dream of a universal language thus gives expression to an ideal, which is to see all discord between men disappear thanks to the use of a common language.

The possibility of creating an artificial language had already been touched upon in the 17th century by Descartes and above all by Leibnitz, who was led by his admiration for the *Ars Magna* of Raymond Lull to revive a project which was originally linked with the idea of a philosopher's alphabet as developed in the East. The enthusiasm with which the eminent logician Louis

Couturat supported Esperanto is yet another example of the interest shown in this question by philosophers and scientists.

However, while the quest for a universal language has arrived at the language of pure logic used by the sciences of today, Esperanto prefers to draw empirically on existing languages, and in particular on the Latin and Germanic languages, without claiming to replace them.

It aims to become an *auxiliary* language which, when used to supplement the national languages that express the thoughts and values peculiar to each people, would offer mankind a medium for facilitating personal contacts at least throughout the whole of a region. Those scientists who have tirelessly supported or participated in the development and expansion of Esperanto have also never ceased to lay stress on the *auxiliary* nature of this means of communication. It is to this combination of logical thinking, modesty and ardour that Esperanto owes its position, among the many projects for an international language, as the one that has had the longest record of continuous existence, which is not the least of its merits.

But despite its importance, the problem of language is only one aspect of communication. That is why Unesco has undertaken a long-term operation whereby it hopes, after elucidating the concept of communication, to transform the ways in which it is applied, so that everyone will be able to exercise the *right to communicate*.

In 1974, at its 18th session, the General Conference instructed me to study the concept of the right to communicate in consultation with the Member States and professional organizations.

At a time when the fundamental importance of communication in a democratic society is becoming ever more apparent, and when the remarkable progress of science and technology is offering man tremendous new opportunities, the quest for a new world order is obviously concerned with communication just as much as with the economic, social and cultural aspects of life. We are now beginning to recognize the value of cultural pluralism and the importance for the world community of preserving the cultural integrity of every people.

The assertion of cultural identity, which is based on recognition of the specificity of each culture and the equal dignity of all cultures, does not by any means preclude fruitful relations between them. Quite the contrary, it is through contacts and exchanges that the different cultures mutually enrich each other. How could these take place if the opportunity to communicate was not offered to all individuals, as well as to all nations? This underlines the importance of securing full observance of the right to information which is proclaimed in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. For it is not simply a matter of ensuring that the people has access to communication media and participates in their use; it is just as necessary to ensure truly reciprocal exchanges of information within a nation or a community, as well as between all the regions of the world. Communication is a two-way process which involves the giving as well as the receiving of information.

If the flow of information is to be both free and well balanced, it is essential that the different parties concerned, each of whom is alternately a provider and a recipient of information, should be equipped to conduct a genuine dialogue.

Existing disparities in the possession and use of the communication media are a 'world challenge' to which Unesco could not remain indifferent. The Organization is bound by its Constitution to "collaborate in the work of advancing the mutual knowledge and understanding of peoples, through all means of mass communication and to that end recommend such international agreements as may be necessary to promote the free flow of ideas by word and image".

Accordingly, Unesco has repeatedly taken action to promote the adoption of a set of international standards in this field. It gives assistance to Member States wishing to formulate a national communication policy. But Unesco does not and cannot seek to impose a particular communication policy on its Member States for implementation at national level. They choose the way which seems to them best adapted to their own aspirations. What Unesco can do to help them is to stimulate reflection, facilitate the exchange of experiences and map out with them courses of action calculated to strengthen international cooperation.

One of the milestones in this effort to find a really effective means of drawing the nations closer together has been the organization of regional conferences on communication policies. At San José, Costa Rica, where the first of these conferences brought together representatives of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean in July 1976, the discussions centered on the "right to communication". These discussions were unparalleled for the variety and complexity of the views exchanged on what is a relatively recent concept reflecting the new dimensions which changing techniques and ideas have given to the principle of the right to information as proclaimed in the 1948 Declaration of Human Rights.

The participants unanimously adopted the 'Declaration of San José' which states among other things that "access to the entire range of cultural resources and the free and democratic participation of all men in the diverse manifestations of the spirit is a human right".

While the full observance of the right to communication guarantees the people's access to and participation in communication, it is clear that it should also help to improve sociability, encourage the exercise of the critical faculties and, most important of all, stimulate the individual and collective creativity which is one of the prerequisites for development.

In 1975, Unesco conducted an international survey among its Member States on the right to communicate. The replies were very informative in their diversity and revealed a marked convergence of ideas. In general, the responsibility and duties of the media towards society were recognized, as well as the importance of access to communication and the effective exercise of the right to give and receive information. It was also emphasized that

cultural integrity should be preserved, but without chauvinism, and that it was essential for every country to make its views known and gain a hearing at international level.

It goes without saying that such problems are far from simple. For this reason Unesco is doing its best to arrive at a clearer definition of the meaning and implications of the right to communication, as it is understood in different cultures and socio-economic systems, and above all to encourage public debate and promote studies on the problems raised by this right.

The historical approach and the cultural approach, the technological implications, the philosophical, legal and political aspects of the question, the impact on society, the present state of flows of information, the progress of work on the formulation of communication policies – all these seem to be some of the essential fields in which our understanding of the problem of the right to communication should be improved.

With this end in view and within the framework of its long-term research programme, Unesco wishes to cooperate closely with all its Member States, with national institutions, including both professional bodies and universities, and with non-governmental organizations, in order to encourage study and discussion of this problem throughout the world.

Many different types of research projects have been included in its programme. These are concerned with:

– the study of the role and processes of communication in society, and the international flow of information;
– experimental activities relating to the development of community media and the improvement of access to media channels and materials;
– an effort to devise ways of guaranteeing the observance of human rights;
– the promotion of a free and balanced flow of information and of policies, infrastructures and training in the field of communication;
– the study of the prospects for communication between nations and of the difficulties which lie ahead, bearing in mind in particular the use of new technologies such as broadcasting by satellite.

In this way Unesco has become involved in obedience to the common will of its Member States, in a programme of investigation which goes to the root of one of the major problems of the modern world: reaching beyond the problem of information, its purpose is to enable men to *communicate*. For one can be 'well-informed' without necessarily 'communicating', and some research workers go so far as to maintain that in the industrialized countries in general the more information one 'consumes' the less one in fact communicates and the greater one's need to communicate.

When it has completed its examination of all the problems associated with communication in the modern world, Unesco hopes that an agreement will be reached on what the aim and purpose of communication should be throughout the world and on the ways in which the international community could extend its action to make communication an ideal instrument for promoting the advancement of peoples and the mutual understanding of nations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The objective which your Congress has set out to attain by inquiring into the right to communicate and all that hinders the exercise of that right, with special reference to linguistic barriers, is at the heart of the problems of the contemporary world.

For although obstacles to the world-wide circulation of ideas have existed at all times, communication between peoples of different languages and cultures has always been recognized as an eminently desirable ideal. Today it is seen to be an absolute necessity in a world in which interdependence of all men is becoming increasingly apparent. It is of course essential to promote respect for freedom of thought and expression, but the conditions for it to be possible must also be created, and that must be achieved without any discrimination.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

All languages are equal in dignity and as instruments of communication, even if differences exist as regards the size of their area of dissemination. Although none of them is destined by its intrinsic nature to cover the whole world, each in its own way represents an area of experience, an achievement, a unique step in the progress of mankind. Therefore, in these days when there are so many technical possibilities for establishing or amplifying dialogues between men, we must study the barriers formed by linguistic differences, and seek ways of surmounting them.

In 1974, a Unesco study revealed how little research had been done on transcultural communication or on the obstacles to the development of such communication: cultural differences, psychological inhibitions hindering understanding, an absence of a common language, etc. Over the past few years, the debate on trans-cultural communication has become more earnest as the possibility of disseminating information across frontiers increased. At the centre of this debate lies the growing awareness of the powers of communication. Some would even say that communication is power. Control of a national information system can indeed enable the defenders of certain interests to influence the decision-making process of a society, and even to shape the cultural and political values on which its unity is based. Here is further proof of the importance of the subject which you are about to discuss.

May I conclude by drawing your attention to an idea which I put forward at the last General Conference of Unesco in Nairobi last November? This idea is that great importance is assumed, within the context of a transformation of relationships between nations, by a type of information which gives a balanced account of the positions of **all** the parties involved.

The flow of information is now one of the questions of the day. It is likely to remain so for several years to come for it is closely linked to the right to communication which can only be fully exercised within the context

of international cooperation on a basis of equality if it goes hand in hand with the right to cultural difference.

Mr. President,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am sure that you too are resolved to promote respect for cultural differences and to work for a better understanding between nations, and I therefore extend to all participants in your Congress my most sincere wishes for success in their endeavours to arrive at fruitful and positive results.

Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow, Director-General of Unesco addressing the opening session of the Congress

Ralph L. Harry

LANGUAGE DIFFERENCES HINDER COOPERATION

. . . Mr. Harry, Australian Ambassador to the United Nations and Member of UEA's International Committee, addressed the Opening Session of the Congress. In the presence of the President of Iceland and numerous representatives of the diplomatic corps, the speaker emphasized the possible contribution of Esperanto to the solution of problems of communication between the nations, and the close connection between communication problems and the other difficulties which beset mankind . . . . . .

Mr. Chairman, I am glad that I speak today not in my own language as representative of Australia but in the international language as an ambassador for Esperanto.

Mr. President, I salute in and through you the people of Iceland, renowned through the centuries for the indomitable spirit with which they have created in this beautiful but hard land a society and an economy, a language and a culture which are an inspiration and example to the world.

Mr. Director-General, your distinguished presence reminds us that education, science and culture have become the heritage of mankind, a field of international cooperation and common endeavour.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the theme of this 62nd Universal Esperanto Congress is freedom of communication. It is a theme which is a challenge to the nations and their governments and also a stimulus to us as individuals.

The world faces many problems and many challenges. We are called to make peace – to create a world without war, a world without the crushing burden and danger of armaments. We are called to organize freedom from want and need – to create a new economic order in which the limited resources of our planet are conserved and shared equitably among and within all countries. We are called to develop justice – to promote the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Great international institutions exist, the United Nations and the specialized agencies like UNESCO within which solutions for the problems of the world can be sought through the cooperation of our nation states. But if we are to find these solutions we must be able to harness the ideas of all the peoples, for wisdom and innovation are not the monopoly of countries which are big and powerful. We must have free communication of ideas because without such communication we can never attain the understanding without which peace will always be precarious.

Even perfect freedom of communication is of course not a guarantee that there will be no conflict. There have been in the past, and no doubt there will be in the future, tragic divisions between people sharing the same language. But experience has shown that differences of language exacerbate misunderstanding and render cooperation more difficult. On the other hand, we at this conference know the contribution which a common language can make to ease of communication. There could be no better demonstration than this grand international meeting without headphones and without interpreters.

We of the Esperanto movement also know the destructive effects of limitations on freedom of communication. Esperantists in many countries have been hampered by censorship, by official discouragement, by prohibition and by the burning of their books. Many, too many, have suffered imprisonment and torture and even the death of martyrs. Yet Esperanto was not a threat. It was a 'dangerous language' only to dictators and chauvinists and reactionaries. For those who seek peace and prosperity through understanding it is a precious aid to communication.

Here in Reykjavik we will have an opportunity to analyze objectively the contribution which a neutral international language can make at the individual, national and international levels.

Freedom of speech must become a reality – in practice as well as in legal theory – not only within each country, but also across the frontiers. The community within which men can share their ideas without fear and without discrimination, must not be limited by geography or politics, it must become world wide. The nations must adopt a common language. Only in that way will they be able to speak to each other without the discriminatory limitations of selected official language on a basis of equality and dignity.

Mr. President, Mr. Director-General, Friends, I believe that the 62nd World Esperanto Congress can become a landmark for UNESCO and for the people everywhere in their aspiration for freedom of communication – for a world which is taking steps to abolish the barrier of language, which is age-old but can be removed.

Andri Ísaksson

UNESCO AND LINGUISTIC COMMUNICATION

. . . . Mr. Ísaksson, Secretary of the Icelandic Unesco Commission and a lecturer in educational psychology at the University of Iceland, spoke at the Second Plenary Session of the Congress. He emphasized both the complexity of the language situation in Unesco and the discriminatory nature of its language policies . . . . . .

I have been asked to speak on the right to communicate. In these introductory remarks I shall be concerned above all with the work of Unesco on this subject, but I shall also present a few personal opinions.

From the very beginning, human rights have been on Unesco's agenda. For the most part the work of Unesco in this field has been characterized by efforts to guarantee the 'free flow of information' among states and continents, and the Organization has tried to assist in bringing about the removal of barriers in the way of the communication of information. Furthermore, as far as the individual is concerned, Unesco has sought to ensure that Article 19 of the Declaration of Human Rights (adopted in 1948) be more than merely a dead letter. In Article 19, which deals with the freedom to express opinions, we read as follows:

> Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers.

In other words, Unesco has concerned itself principally with the political aspect of this matter, which consists in the removal of barriers to the freedom of expression of individuals and nations.

What practical steps can we mortals take to improve the application of the right to communicate? Our work must lie in the creation of conditions, as far as humanly possible, in which anyone can exercise this right. What are these conditions? First, they have to do with guaranteeing for all a level of education sufficient to allow people to express themselves in their own native language. Accompanying this general education there should be a certain tolerance in linguistic communication, so that for example local characteristics of one's native language can develop naturally. Second, they have to do

with the establishment of mass media which are not only free but also responsible and efficient, so that given social groups, the nation at large, and even entire regions not be neglected. And here there arise great difficulties. What primarily limits free and efficient mass media is on the one hand the opposition of public authorities in various countries and on the other hand shortsighted profit motives on the part of the owners of the mass media. Improvement is necessary, but it will not take place to any significant degree without constant educational and cultural work and political initiatives aimed at a new sense of values. The third and last condition has to do with the discovery of a means of communication which will allow all peoples and language communities to exchange information and opinions.

What has Unesco done in the field of languages? Principally it has recognized the languages of certain large nations and parts of the world as working languages. The major working languages of Unesco are French and English, but in the biennial General Conference of the Organization, Spanish, Russian, Chinese and Arabic are also used. Then there follows translation among these languages. We must remember that Unesco is first and foremost an international body of governments which is concerned with cooperation and progress in the fields of education, culture and science. National chauvinism asserts itself to a notable degree in this area of language policy, as is usual among governments. As things now stand, we can consider it more likely that Unesco will in the future introduce a seventh working language than that it will achieve agreement on the reduction of the number, to say nothing of the eventual use of a single common language.

The direction of Unesco on language matters, as I have described it here, contains within it various limitations on the right to communicate. This direction creates an inequality which principally the smaller peoples belonging to the Organization must suffer. Generally there is a great deal of difference between the power of the words of someone who is allowed to speak in his own language and someone who must use the language of another people. Of course, such a power of persuasion is dependent upon a situation in which many conference participants understand the native language of the speaker concerned. The multilingual direction of Unesco therefore brings about a situation in which the native language even of a large people, if it is understood by a few, proves an unsuitable means of communication. In this regard, simultaneous interpretation is not sufficiently developed to eliminate the disadvantage and there is considerable question as to whether it can even replace to any considerable degree direct understanding of the spoken word. Such is the nature of the situation. We need also to bear in mind the fact that the language policy of Unesco is extremely expensive. This is discernible in many ways among the smaller member states.

These are factors which I want to bring to your attention in the hope that they will be given fuller consideration in our subsequent discussion.

Leonard R. Sussman

LANGUAGE AND THE DEMOCRACY OF COMMUNICATION

. . . At the conclusion of the Second Plenary Session, Mr. L.R. Sussman, invited to attend the Congress as a communications specialist, reviewed and commented on some of the arguments advanced in the debate. He stressed the clash between freedom and responsibility in the area of communications and he suggested a role for Esperanto. The following is a summary of his remarks . . . .

I am a perfect example of your problem. I'm supposed to be a specialist on communications, yet I have difficulty communicating with you. I attend many international conferences but this is the first one in which language has served to *advance* rather than impede discussion.

Mr. Isaksson is right: the UN and its agencies demonstrate the great difficulty faced by the common language proponents as well as those who would open communication of all kinds – including the freeing of the news media. The 1945 Constitution of UNESCO promises to "promote the free flow of ideas by word and image" – a splendid general principle. The 1948 meetings of the Commission on Human Rights, and two subsequent subcommittees, strived for many years to apply the principle of openness and wider information flow to practical programs. They tried to formulate a declaration on the Freedom of Information. To this day, they have not been able to do so. There is a great gap between principle and practice, promise and performance.

Similarly, UNESCO has been struggling to translate free flow into wider dissemination of information, particularly to the Third World. The basic division is over the *right* to free communication, uncontrolled by government, as against the *responsibility* to provide information. Should that responsibility be assured by government regulation or control? I agree with Dr. Pool [who spoke earlier] that the media must be "free and responsible" – free of government, yet showing restraint and responsibility. For rights – no matter how vital – do not stand alone. There is inevitably a clash of rights. Chief Justice Hughes, you remember, defended the right to freedom of speech, but emphasized that it does not include the right to shout fire in a crowded theatre. I agree with [our chairman] Dr. Corsetti that all problems cannot be solved with language. Yet the language issue goes beyond the technical

structure of speech. Language is used as a great political weapon, as a mobilizer of societies, as a call to specific action, as a propaganda channel. Language, therefore, is not treated casually by many governments. Mass participation in society presents dilemmas. We need mass media to reach the fast-growing populations and to keep up with great technological advances and demands. Yet the very mass-ness of the news media makes two-way communication harder all the time – for individuals and for small nations.

I would advise Esperanto speakers to stress above all Esperanto's appeal for equality – not for special preference in the field of language, and not the elimination of any other language. This is important because such an appeal doesn't ask governments to do what they should *not* do – that is, discriminate.

Such an appeal also places Esperanto on the side of supporting democratic cultural pluralism – the creation of systems in which indeed different cultures and people have equal access to one another, and to the values and creativity of the general society. In the long run Esperanto will be more than equal to the task of enabling states *themselves* to communicate across frontiers by using Esperanto.

UEA should prod the UN and its agencies to consider Esperanto in small ways, particularly by engaging in research to analyze the possibilities of its broader use within and between states. Though the UN is not yet ready to adopt a common language, it may do so after – paradoxically – the situation grows worse. When many more official languages are adopted, at great expense and amid greater confusion, the UN may one day turn to a universal language in which to conduct its business.

I emphasize the words ***research*** and ***persuasion*** to advance this cause.

Esperanto, by pressing for the cause of a transnational language, will make a contribution to the advancement of human rights – a subject that, quite properly, is foremost today in the minds and hearts of men and women everywhere.

THE DEBATE AND ITS CONCLUSIONS

. . . The following is a summary of the principal views expressed by the participants in the Reykjavik sessions. It presents only the broad traits of the discussions. It follows the four basic questions posed by Humphrey Tonkin at the conclusion of his discussion paper . . . . . .

What are the areas of human activity where the need for the right to communicate is most strongly felt?

Everyone living in a community is involved in acts of communication. Every society, even though small and relatively simply structured, needs a certain quantity of communication if it is to hold together and achieve its aims. Such conclusions are readily evident from the study of extinct and existing societies – from prehistoric hunting groups to contemporary industrial states.

It is equally a truism that the more a community grows, the more complex its communication needs become. At the same time, every community develops channels of communication aimed at satisfying these growing needs – from fireside discussions of everyday problems all the way to satellites, television networks, news agencies. The problem of the right to communicate arises out of a feeling that the channels of communication are inadequate to the demand for communication – that they satisfy certain needs but not others.

Because of the multiplicity of aspects of human life which somehow relate to communication, it proved very difficult to define a list of priorities and to distinguish clearly the areas of human activity where the need for the right to communicate is most evident. However, the participants in the debate did distinguish certain fields where the pressures of today's world necessitate a great deal of communication and which can hardly develop further without adequate means.

Three areas were singled out: *education, information, and participation in political decisions.* By 'information' we mean the storage and conveyance of data through print and other media.

Clearly education and information are based on the communication of knowledge. Equally clearly, there exists a right of access to education and

information. At issue, then, is the nature of the systems of communication actually used in the realization of these rights. Are they adequate to ensure *universal* access? Do they ensure access at a sufficiently high level? Do they convey the information and education needed by the people to exercise their political and physical rights, and to seek their spiritual and physical betterment? Are they, or should they be, value-free? Are they discriminatory? And do they also allow the further dissemination of information and education *at the choice of* the individual recipient? Clearly all of these questions have their linguistic implications.

For ordinary people, participation in political decisions is becoming steadily more difficult without the assistance of institutional and technological aids, because the more society grows, the farther removed are the places where the decisions are actually made. In a village meeting anyone can stand up and direct questions in his or her dialect at well-known people about well-known problems. But how can that same villager make his voice heard among government ministers hundreds of miles away, who speak a literary language he does not understand and who debate problems formulated in abstractions but directly related to the everyday life of that villager?

On the other hand everyone is aware of the necessity of acquiring the consent of all concerned, so that decisions can in fact be carried out; and consent in the final analysis is dependent upon a feeling of collective decision-making.

Here, then, is a major problem of two-directional communication. Democratic society depends upon the ability of the individual to participate in the creation of institutions and in their operation; and upon the ability of those institutions to communicate with every individual in terms and in language which he or she fully understands.

In what ways do conflicting needs – between individual and individual, between community and community, or between individual and collective – impinge on the right to communicate or limit its applicability?

The participants in the debate looked at this question essentially from two points of view. On the one hand they examined the problems created by the relation of individual to collective, or in other words between individual citizens and governments; and on the other hand they explored the implications of modern means of communication between communities, with special attention to relations among states.

The fact that the participants came from many different countries was reflected in the way in which they approached the subject, their views echoing the two main opinions already expressed in Unesco debates on the subject.

Some emphasized the belief that at the moment what is most important is the absolute freedom of the individual citizen to express whatever he or she wishes by whatever means of communication may be available. Only in this way can everyone have the opportunity to express publicly his or her own opinion on any subject, regardless of how unpalatable this opinion may be to those in authority.

But this absolute freedom of expression can all too easily run up against other 'absolute' principles. Does freedom of expression, for example, include freedom to express falsehood or lies? If freedom of expression carries with it a moral obligation to express the truth, who determines what is and is not of the truth? If society at large makes this determination, how can the views of minorities ever receive adequate expression? If an independent judiciary plays a role here, where does *it* go for its values? The issue, in short, becomes progressively more complicated.

Freedom of expression is a fundamental principle of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, reaffirmed in recent years in a number of international instruments, most recently in the Helsinki declaration. But, as several participants in the debate pointed out, this theoretical right is of little value if the means of communication are beyond the reach of the ordinary citizen. Freedom of expression, it was suggested, must be accompanied by equal access to the means of such expression.

Illiterates, the uneducated and the starving certainly can never profit from this theoretical right. And in several countries the majority of the means whereby information is collected, processed and communicated, are in the hands of a relatively small and unrepresentative sector of the population.

It would be naive to argue that this group is concerned only with the conveying of information and that it has no influence on its content. In today's world, the sheer quantity of information positively bombards those responsible for the media of communication, and they influence what is and is not conveyed not only by their *interpretation* of the facts but simply in their *choice* of which facts to convey. From this it follows that the community, or in practice its public institutions, have an obligation to ensure a fundamental equal ability to communicate, curbing the influence of particular power groups and enfranchizing others.

There was a general awareness, however, that this is a very difficult area, in which democratic institutions have often not kept pace with technological advances, and new approaches to old problems seem required as illiteracy recedes, educational opportunity increases, and technology increasingly intrudes on settled individualism.

The subsequent debate turned on the question of the limits of freedom and responsibility. As with all problems of balance, there exists no absolute formula valid everywhere and under all circumstances. But there was a measure of agreement that: (a) there exist limits upon the absolute right of the individual citizen and upon the right of society to interfere with the freedom of the individual; (b) that the definition of these limits must take place in each society in the context of the actual conditions obtaining in that society; (c) that generally every community must first guarantee fundamentally practical possibilities for every citizen to communicate (for example by providing access to education) and, second, not hinder the expression of opinions because of their content.

On the matter of relations between states, as opposed to those between individuals and their governments, there was a greater measure of agreement, at least on the nature of the problem if not on its solution.

It is evident (and in this regard data collected by Unesco is helpful) that the small or poor – in other words, weak – countries do not have the same opportunities to communicate as the powerful countries. Furthermore, technological progress, and the improvement of the means of mass communication, seem only to exacerbate their problem, because in today's world technology is the possession of the more powerful nations.

The results of this state of affairs are variously described as cultural imperialism or one-directional communication – each term carrying its particular political overtones. As the Director-General of Unesco, Mr. M'Bow pointed out in a speech to the 19th Unesco General Conference in November 1976, "Information, because it goes in large measure in one direction and because it emanates from a small number of sources situated primarily in the industrialized countries, reflects the attitudes of the society from which it originates and the suppliers of the material means of communication: so, willingly or otherwise, they tend to impose their cultural models."

Abundant examples were given of the condition of the weaker countries, primarily the developing nations, and also of the weaker peoples living in multicultural societies. The danger of the disappearance of so many cultures currently tenuously surviving under the shadow of neighbours more powerful, but not necessarily more valuable, was given particular attention. Congress members emphasized the right of all communities to defend their cultures against intrusion from outside and to develop them in accordance with their original characteristics – though here, too, the issue is more complex than it might seem at first.

An element in the discussion particularly relevant in the context of the Congress was the question of the right of everyone to communicate with all other people regardless of frontiers. This principle is fundamental to the entire work of the movement for Esperanto, which aims to make it possible for people to communicate directly with other people in all parts of the world, to pass on to them information and to receive information in return. Speakers of Esperanto are in this regard in a particularly fortunate position because they have succeeded in crossing the linguistic and cultural boundaries which often confine international interpersonal relations to predetermined regions or groups of countries socially, politically or culturally homogeneous. Furthermore, prevailing attitudes in the Esperanto speech community, whose members often decline on principle to apply the concept of 'foreignness' to other cultures, support such universality..

What are the linguistic dimensions of the Right to Communicate, and how does the lack of a common language hinder the application of this right?

As with all problems, the realization of a full right to communicate presents several distinguishable but interrelated aspects. During the Congress

debates, efforts were made to present the main characteristics of the entire question – the technological, the political, and so on. But inevitably, given the nature of the discussants, the fullest and most original contributions came in the area of language.

A review of the studies and discussions on the right to communicate accumulated over the past few years reveals that there is scarcely any mention of the role of language in this connection. Although from time to time in the various conferences, seminars etc. on the right to communicate, there is some glancing mention of language or even an occasional expression of regret at the linguistic barriers to communication, for the most part the topic has been neglected. This neglect is sometimes so striking as to seem intentional. Is language too highly charged and emotional a topic to be discussed rationally?

Everyone would probably agree that language is one of the principal, if not *the* principal, means by which information is conveyed. In fact all technological means of communication, though extremely important, are to a greater or lesser extent merely means of carrying human speech or written language over greater geographical areas or distances, or faster than would otherwise be possible. And speech and writing can take place only in the context of a given language or linguistic system.

There exist in the world many languages, which function as means of communication. From a purely linguistic and technical point of view they are all equally well suited to convey all kinds of information. If certain languages are currently not used in certain areas of knowledge (e.g. engineering or medicine) this is not because they are structurally deficient but because of socio-political considerations.

How are standard languages chosen? All available historical evidence suggests that such choice does not take place democratically. The language whose speakers are strongest is the language that tends to dominate in a given social or political setting. In other words, the standard language tends to be the everyday language of the powerful, the rich, the prestigious. And this is so at every level of communication. The ruling class tends to impose its language on the other classes; the ruling nation in a multinational state imposes its language on the others; the major power in a given region or in the world at large tends to impose its language on its economic or political satellites. Often these other classes or nations or satellite states willingly, if unwittingly, abet such linguistic hegemony. While such findings may seem brutal, the discussants could find no concrete instances to disprove their conclusions.

Those who do not command such standard languages or languages of wider communication are automatically relegated to an inferior position in the communication process. While such stratification may be a result of the social dynamic itself, hardly eradicable by linguistic means, the fact remains that it is discernible at all levels of communication. A peasant who does not speak the official national language is debarred from writing a letter of protest to the tax office. A diplomat who speaks Yoruba or Thai as his first language

is debarred from participation in a UN debate on equal terms with a diplomat whose native language is among the working languages of the Organization.

Languages are not 'neutral' means of communication. Although all languages are potentially capable of conveying every kind of information, each ethnic language, belonging to a specific human community, reflects its own cultural background and serves to convey the values of the community which uses it as its native language. In other words it is not possible for a foreigner to use Japanese and remain totally ignorant of Japanese society. Despite the wishful thinking of some, the same is true of English or Russian or Chinese.

By choosing one language over another, one at once defines the active and passive participants in a given communication situation. One often also defines which group or groups will be excluded from participation entirely. For example, if a government body in an African country decides to broadcast radio programmes solely or principally in English, that decision limits the processing of information to a small internationally educated elite, and the consumption of that information to an educated population consisting largely of city-dewellers, and at the same time it completely excludes everyone else from the process of communication (farmers, craftsmen, labourers, etc.). When Unesco decides to publish its reports in English and not in Italian, it thereby decides that Italians are unlikely to be authors of such reports (unless the texts are translated), that Italians who have studied English are the preferred readers of the reports (rather than Poles who have studied Russian, for example), and that an average teacher in an Arab country will be completely unable to read texts immediately accessible to his counterpart in the United States. We enter here the area of language policy and language planning – an area fraught with political, cultural and social implications of major importance.

Any reader still unconvinced of these points might perform a simple mental experiment: imagine that the United Nations decided one day to turn the linguistic tables and make the languages of the world's seven neediest ethnic groups the only official and working languages of the General Assembly...

We can summarize these observations in two simple statements. First, as things now stand, the more powerful partner in a bilateral communication situation across languages tends to enjoy an additional advantage: he uses his native language. Second, reciprocity of communication is minimal or non-existent when the recipient of the information does not fully command the language used.

Refusal to face up to the linguistic implications of the current international situation can only work to the disadvantage of those nations already disadvantaged in other respects. In short, it reinforces the status quo.

What steps are required to articulate the need to give attention to these linguistic dimensions and to solve problems thus defined, where appropriate,

through the International Language Esperanto? What are the strengths and limitations of such a solution?

One point was constantly reiterated. The international and national bodies currently giving attention to the right to communicate (among them Unesco itself) must take into consideration the matter of language. It is so utterly fundamental, so entirely universal, that it is often neglected in favour of more visible but more peripheral issues. It is particularly important that international (and presumably non-partisan) organizations carry out research and make recommendations in this area.

It was particularly suggested that those nations whose languages do not enjoy wide currency pay particular attention to the matter of linguistic barriers in the way of the right to communicate. Special awareness of this dimension of the problem should be apparent among those nations and regions, particularly in Africa and Asia, striving to preserve their cultural identities.

How can the International Language Esperanto help in this regard? Naturally this question was discussed extensively, and the presence of specialists in communications and international relations as consultants at the congress proved particularly fruitful in these deliberations. The visiting experts sensitized many delegates to the complexities of what most Esperanto speakers simply perceive as 'the language barrier'. Their interaction helped create an understanding that different kinds of language problems lend themselves to different remedies. A language of wider communication, and, all the more, one special kind of language of wider communication like Esperanto, can be expected to be far more useful under some conditions than under others.

There was general agreement that, first, Esperanto can help in those situations in which differences of language create inequality or disequilibrium. It was emphasized, however, that Esperanto can help solve only the *linguistic* aspects of such problems, whose sources are often highly complex.

Second, the principal strength of such a solution through Esperanto lies in its democracy. An international constructed language is in principle the language of no one and everyone. Its use in the international sphere ensures that no country or language group can gain immediate linguistic advantage. Through its use the linguistic status of all participants in the process of communication is equal, and language ceases to be a political issue.

At the same time (and thirdly) Esperanto does not aim to replace existing languages, but to serve as a common second language, under whose protection existing languages can freely survive and evolve. In this way it stands on the side of the defenders of linguistic and cultural pluralism. An ideal solution for the member of a small language group would seem to be the full possession of his (or her) own native language for full participation in its ethnic culture, and capability in Esperanto for wider inter-group or transnational exchanges.

Fourth, Esperanto possesses an additional advantage over the ethnic languages as a means of international communication in that it is easier to learn. This ease of learning, though clearly established through studies of certain language groups (e.g. English, Swedish, Japanese), needs to be studied in relation to other languages.

The principal limitations on the use of Esperanto as a means of solving the linguistic problems associated with the right to communicate appear to be five in number: first, the relatively small number of speakers of Esperanto (they number probably in the hundreds of thousands); second, the gap between the abundant information accessible in the few languages of advanced technology and the fraction of that information so far recorded in Esperanto; third, the fact that the resources used for overcoming language barriers are dispersed among so many actors that the investment capital needed for any major alteration in the world linguistic order seems almost impossible to mobilize; fourth (and related to the third point), the relative lack of information on the part of much of the public, not only about Esperanto but about the function of language in general; fifth, the psychological prejudices sometimes directed against it. Nevertheless all of these problems might be easily overcome with a fraction of the energy and resources now devoted annually to other, traditional means of overcoming the barrier of language (language teaching, interpretation, translation, etc.).

RECOMMENDATIONS

. . . From the week's debates there emerged a number of concrete suggestions concerning next steps to be taken by the Association and by other organizations concerned with the right to communicate. We present these recommendations for the consideration of the various bodies in question . . . . . .

1. The last few years have seen a notable increase in interest in the relationship between media of communication and the well-being of the individual citizen. This has been occasioned partly by advances in technology, which have changed the entire character of the processes of communication, and partly by a deepening of our thinking on matters related to human rights and the rights of the individual.

This interest has taken many forms – from the study of television violence to exploration of the role of mass media in participatory democracy, and from the use of communications satellites in education to debate over the two-directional flow of information. Unesco's role in this process has been particularly extensive and promises to be more so.

Accordingly, we commend Unesco for its interest in the processes of communication and particularly in the right to communicate, and we urge the member-states to participate fully in these studies and programmes of activities.

2. Among non-governmental organizations attention to the right to communicate has so far been modest, but their relative freedom from outside pressures renders the NGO's particularly suitable settings for the exploration of the complexities of this question.

We urge the nongovernmental organizations, for example those in consultative relations with Unesco, to include in their programmes attention to the right to communicate, and to establish joint consultations on aspects of common interest.

3. Alongside the increased interest in communication rights there has grown up a body of research and active study on the political function of language.

Indeed this is one of the more rapidly growing areas of modern political studies. A new sub-discipline, the study of language planning, has emerged. Language planners are interested in the modernization and standardization of languages to meet the changing needs of modern society. They are also concerned with the development of policies within and among societies to determine the functions which different languages are to perform. Esperanto studies and interlinguistics are commanding new attention, since the study of constructed language has much to tell us not only about the nature and function of language but also about the possibilities and limits of language planning. These newly emerging areas of interest are reflected in the recent launching of a new journal, *Language Problems and Language Planning*, and in the programmes of such disparate bodies as the Ford Foundation and the Academy of Sciences of the USSR.

To matters of language, and particularly to language and international communication, the Universal Esperanto Association brings a unique competence. Dedicated to the principle that all people should be able to communicate on a non-discriminatory basis through a common language, our Association has given sustained and careful attention to language problems and their solution.

This increased interest in language and its political and social implications, however, has so far had very little impact on the study of the right to communicate or on attempts at its definition. In Unesco's work or the work of other bodies, we detect a serious lack of attention to that most basic element of communication, the written and spoken word.

We propose that Unesco and other interested bodies take immediate steps to assess the importance of language in the definition and application of a right to communicate, and that future programmes of study include attention to the factor of language.

4. There are numerous areas in which language choice or the limitations of language impinge on international communication rights. The large news agencies, for example, are not only European and American but use European languages; diplomats carry on most of their business in certain European languages; the great international organizations carry on most of their activities through the medium of the mother tongues of a minority of member-states. Examples could be multiplied.

We propose that research be carried out, by such bodies as Unesco, the United Nations University and UNITAR, on the effects of language choice in international relations.

5. In international organizations particularly, the use of certain languages and the exclusion of others creates a group of second-class citizens, unable to manipulate the languages of the larger states as articulately as their native speakers and often obliged to occupy a secondary role in much of the business

of the organizations. There is a tendency to regard such problems as either insoluble or as too politically delicate to confront. We believe this to be a mistaken impression. There are solutions to hand, they are threatening to no nation of goodwill, and they are practical and realizable.

We propose that steps be taken to study the effects of such linguistic discrimination in international bodies, with a view to creating new policies to alleviate these difficulties and to create greater linguistic equality.

6. Although a few nongovernmental organizations, among them the World Council of Churches, have devoted attention to language difficulties and the effects of language differences on their work, such questions seem to have been largely ignored by intergovernmental bodies. To the best of our knowledge no large intergovernmental organization has seriously investigated alternatives to multilingualism, although many such organizations have, at one time or another, acknowledged that multilingualism is often costly and inefficient. Shortly the Universal Esperanto Association will propose to the United Nations the conduct of an experiment in the limited use of Esperanto as a language of internal documentation for the UN. We urge that this proposal receive careful consideration and that it be implemented on this limited basis. If the UN makes no effort to measure and mitigate the discriminatory effects of the current linguistic regime, we fear that it will open itself to moves for reverse discrimination in this area, with all the expense, chaos and polarization that this would entail.

We urge the United Nations and Unesco and other interested bodies to carry out experiments with the practical use of Esperanto, with a view to reducing linguistic inequality, cutting costs and increasing efficiency.

7. Although we know a great deal about the practical use of Esperanto (it has been in use for ninety years, it has proved suitable for every kind of human commerce, it has a fully developed structure and vocabulary), there are still areas where further measurement and research should be carried out. We know that it is easier to learn than other languages but we do not know by how much; we know that international norms of pronunciation are well established, but we do not know what degree of variation is in fact tolerable; we know that the language is capable of every kind of use, but technical vocabulary must be built in some areas. Scholars and others are active in such research today, but greater attention to such study is needed.

We urge that international bodies make funds and facilities available for the study of the suitability of Esperanto as a means of communication in international organizations and the standardization of the relevant terminology.

8. One area in which the international use of the large European languages has a powerful effect is that of economic development. The transfer of technology to the developing countries is carried on largely through the medium

of the languages in whose territories this technology originates. Unesco has a long history of concern for the effects of such a one-way movement on the cultural integrity of the developing countries.

We propose that Unesco and other bodies give particular attention to the linguistic implications of economic development, especially as these touch on the maintenance of cultural pluralism and the rights of the peoples of the developing countries.

9. In recent years increasing attention has been devoted to education for international understanding. The 18th Session of the Unesco General Conference (Paris, 1974) adopted a Recommendation on this subject, and various aspects of the topic received extended attention in the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference. Fundamental to such education is the element of equality: all nations must reach out equally to teach their citizens one another's values. Such equality must be apparent also in the field of language. As far as possible, the burden of language teaching should be borne equally by all countries, and not become the special additional problem of the small nations or the developing countries.

We urge that special attention be devoted to the role of language learning in international education. Without linguistic means, citizens cannot exercise their right to inform and to be informed in the international area.

10. On the matter of education for international understanding, the role of Esperanto has been particularly impressive. Taught in schools in many countries, the International Language has linked children with their contemporaries across national boundaries through a common language. Because it is easier to learn, it is easier to use: after only a year or two of training, schoolchildren can carry on sophisticated communication with their counterparts in other countries, and education for international understanding can take on a powerful immediacy.

We recommend that Unesco and other bodies study the use of Esperanto in all levels of education and its potential for the future.

* * *

Finally we stress that our own efforts in the area of international understanding are not narrowly conceived. While the primary concern of our Congress was naturally that of language, our Association is anxious to join with all international organizations and with individual governments and citizens to explore the implications of the right to communicate and to bring the world closer to its fullest possible application – locally, nationally and, above all, internationally. Let us do everything we can to achieve this goal.

CONGRESS RESOLUTION

. . . At its Closing Meeting on 6 August the Congress adopted a general resolution calling on national Esperanto associations to support the work of Unesco in the definition and implementation of the right to communicate, and on UEA's Executive Board to work with Unesco on further studies and practical activities . . . . . .

The participants in the 62nd World Congress of Esperanto, meeting from 30 July to 6 August, 1977, in Reykjavik, Iceland,

noting with satisfaction the initiative of Unesco to explore the complex problems surrounding the Right to Communicate;

expressing their hope for further progress in the carrying out of the Final Act of Helsinki, especially in the area of international communication on the basis of equal rights;

having heard with great interest the important speech of the Director-General of Unesco, Mr. Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow, during the Inauguration of the Congress, on this same subject;

underlining the importance of the linguistic aspect of communication, particularly in international relations – an aspect generally insufficiently taken into account;

cautioning that in today's world hundreds of languages and their cultures are threatened with extinction because of discriminatory practices with respect to communication;

having discussed in several meetings during the Congress the various aspects of communication, particularly the linguistic barriers to full application of the right to communicate;

propose that the national Esperanto associations:

1. Give continued attention to the aims and activities of Unesco, particularly in the field of international cultural exchanges,

2. Concern themselves with the right to communicate, in cooperation with National Unesco Commissions,

3. Show, through concrete international cultural activities, consonant with the aims of Unesco and those of UEA, the utility of the International Language for international communication on the basis of equal rights;

charge the Executive Board of the Universal Esperanto Association (UEA):

1. To inform, through suitable documentation, Unesco, its member states, the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the signatories of the Final Act of Helsinki about the results of the discussion on the congress topic,
2. To express to Unesco the urgent feelings of speakers of Esperanto about the necessity to explore in greater depth the linguistic aspects of the Right to Communicate and the role of an international language in the development of a new world order of communications,
3. To propose the help of UEA and its specialized bodies in such research.